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SONG OF SONGS

TO THE READER

Edition of the Greek Text

This translation of the Song of Songs follows the critical Greek text provided in my study, *Lost Keys: Text and Interpretation in Old Greek Song of Songs and its Earliest Manuscript Witnesses* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996).[1] Apart from punctuation, this Greek text is substantially the same as that of Alfred Rahlfs' edition (*Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes, 2 vols.* [Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935]). Footnotes mark the points where the two texts vary.

Translation Profile of the Greek

General Character

Old Greek Song of Songs (hereafter, Greek Song) is a consistently literal (word-for-word) translation rather than a literary (sense-for-sense) translation. It is a formal-equivalence translation. Its register is very much that of a study aid to a text in another language. The Song of Songs is one of the Old Greek translations that most closely fits the paradigm of an interlinear translation, as the NETS project uses that term.[2]

In comparison with other Old Greek translations, Greek Song is among the most consistent in its interlinear representation of Hebrew.[3] In trying to be completely faithful to its Hebrew source, Greek Song represents each separable piece (word or morpheme) of the Hebrew with a formal equivalent in Greek, and to the extent possible, it puts the Greek equivalents in the same order as the Hebrew originals.

In addition, the Greek translator very often translates atomistically rather than contextually. In other words, he or she (see below) tends to choose a Greek word whose meaning corresponds to the meaning (or a presumed etymological meaning) of the Hebrew word rather than to its meaning in the context. The translator occasionally brings a clever mastery of Greek vocabulary or even a flash of brilliance to the task but more often provides a wooden pony for understanding the Hebrew.

Unfortunately, a pony is often inadequate for this Hebrew text, which is figurative and polyvalent, often enigmatic and sometimes obscure. Very frequently the Hebrew uses words that are unique or rare, and some of these are unfamiliar to our translator. He guesses their meanings from context, from etymology,[4] and from their use in other books. Sometimes he apparently coins new words, such as καλλιόω and καρδιόω (in 4.9–10) and ἐκλοχίζω (in 5.10). Sometimes he makes a Greek word serve as it was never meant to serve. When all else fails, he transliterates. He is so focused on formal fidelity to the original text and so committed to his interlinear approach that his translation is sometimes difficult to understand as Greek.

Hebrew Text and Vocalization

The presumed Hebrew *Vorlage* of Greek Song varies quantitatively from the Masoretic Text about 29 times.[5] In addition, the Greek translator assumes a vocalization different from the traditional vocalization of the Masoretic Text about 23 times.[6] We may give one example that long influenced other translations, such as the Vulgate. In five places (Song 1.2, 4; 4.10; 6.11; 7.13), the Hebrew word דדים is rendered as if vocalized *dadim* ("breasts") instead of *dodim* ("loving"), which is the preferable reading found in the Masoretic Text.

1 Available as UMI Microform 9628015 from UMI Dissertation Services.

2 See Pietersma, "Paradigm."

3 It ranks with Routh and Ecclesiast in its consistent representation of all elements of all Hebrew words without addition or subtraction, in its consistent representation of Hebrew words in the same order, and in its consistent representation of Hebrew words by the same stereotyped Greek words. For this analysis, see Chapter 2 of Benjamin G. Wright III, *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text* (SBLSCS 26; Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1989).

4 Greek Song provides a translation based on a presumed etymology about 25 times, according to *The Parallel Aligned Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Texts of Jewish Scripture* (Computer Assisted Tools for Septuagint Studies, at Hebrew University and The University of Pennsylvania, under the direction of Emanuel Tov).

5 The original translation was revised toward a changing Hebrew text several times, most famously in Origen's *Hexapla*. The evidence suggests at least five slightly different forms of the Hebrew text.

6 According to *The Parallel Aligned Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Texts of Jewish Scripture*.

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In a failure to understand the parallelism of 1.10, the rare word תּוֹר ("turn, plait") is translated as if it were תּוֹר ("turtledove"), which appears in 2.12. In 1.11, ὁμοιώματα ("images, likenesses") renders the same root, apparently read as תֹּאַר ("appearance"). Reading ושׁים ("and teeth") instead of ישׁים ("of the sleepers") made a very difficult passage (Song 7.10) less difficult.

Occasional odd readings in Greek Song may be attributed to dividing words differently from the Masoretic Text. In 5.14, for example, the Greek translator may have read מעלפּת ("encrusted") as מעל פּת ("on a piece"), rendered ἐπὶ λίθου ("on a . . . stone"). Word division may also serve in part to explain how the relatively simple מן המדבר ("from the desert") in 8.5 might turn into λελευκανθισμένη ("made white").[7]

Semantic Adequacy

The Greek translator sometimes had difficulty rendering the particularly large number of *hapax legomena* and other rare and obscure words in Hebrew Song of Songs. For example, he uses κοιλωμάτων to translate the obscure *hapax legomenon*, בתר (meaning uncertain) in 2.17. In 4.1 and 6.5, the root גלשׁ ("go up, go down"), found nowhere else, is treated as if it were גלה ("to uncover"). In 7.2, he renders the *hapax* חמוקי ("turnings"?) by ῥυθμοί ("rhythms, forms"), probably based on the context.

In Song 7.6, the Greek translator encountered the rare word רהט (elsewhere, "watering trough"; here, something like "tress"). He takes his cue from Aramaic רהט (= Heb. רוּץ, "run") and translates using παραδρομή, a Greek word that usually means something like "a running beside or across, traversal, passage, attendant." Readers ever after have been left to guess what this isolate translation might mean in this context.

One of the more interesting renderings recurs in the adjuration formula in 2.7; 3.5; 5.8; 8.4. The Hebrew nouns (צבאות, "female gazelles"; אילות, "female deer"; שׂדה, "field") resemble divine epithets (צבאות, "hosts"; אלהים, "gods, goddesses"; שׁדי, "Shaddai") in an invocation of divine beings. The OG rendering, ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσιν καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἰσχύσεσιν τοῦ ἀγροῦ ("by the powers and by the forces of the field") does little to tone down the implied polytheism.

Another recurring oddity of Greek Song is its translation of צמה ("veil") as σιώπησις ("taciturnity") in 4.1, 3; 6.7. This rendering, which is not easy to understand contextually, seems to be based on misunderstanding the root of this rare noun to be צמת ("to silence").[8]

Semantic Leveling

Although Greek Song has a strong tendency to use the same Greek word to translate a given Hebrew word, it also occasionally shows a slight tendency to semantic leveling (that is, using the same Greek word to express more than one Hebrew word). Examples include ἐκλεκτός for בחור in 5.15 and for ברה in 6.9, 10, and θάμβος for פּחד in 3.8 and for אימה in 6.4, 10.

Transliteration

At several points, we observe the last device of a desperate translator: the transliteration of an otherwise untranslatable term. תּלפּיות (an obscure *hapax legomenon* translated "courses" in NRSV) is transliterated as θαλπιωθ in 4.4. אהלות ("aloes") is transliterated αλωθ in 4.14.[9] תּרשׁישׁ is transliterated θαρσ(ε)ις in 5.14.[10] The word פּז ("refined gold") appears twice, transliterated φαζ in 5.11 and translated χρυσᾶς ("gold") in 5.15.[11]

Transliteration is an admirable course of action for proper names, but Αμιναδαβ (in 6.12 for נדיב עמי, possibly "princely people") and Ναδαβ (in 7.2 for נדיב, "noble") are transliterations where one might expect a translation instead. At four points, Greek Song uses translations where one might expect a transliterated name. In 2.1, τοῦ πεδίου ("the plain") translates the relatively rare term, השׁרון ("Sharon"). In 4.8, πίστεως ("faithfulness") translates the rare אמנה ("Amana") along etymological lines.[12] In 6.4, εὐδοκία ("goodwill") translates the relatively rare תּרצה ("Tirzah") along etymological lines. Finally, in 7.5, θυγατρὸς πολλῶν ("daughter of many") translates בת־רבים ("Bath-Rabbim").

7 See the commentaries.

8 *Pace* E. Blakeney, "A Note on the Word σιώπησις: Canticles iv.1,3; vi.6," *Expository Times* 55 (1943–44) 138.

9 The Hebrew Bible contains only one other instance of the word אהלות, in Psalm 45.9 (= LXX 44.8), where it is translated στακτή.

10 The same transliteration is used for תּרשׁישׁ in Iezekiel 1.16 and Daniel (Theodotion) 10.6 (and for תּרסית in Ieremias 19.2).

11 Perhaps it was transliterated in Song 5.11 because χρυσίον had just been used to translate כתם.

12 Compare Nehemiah 10.1 in MT = 2 Esdras 20.1 in LXX = Nehemiah 9.38 in NRSV.

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Idioms

Idioms do not lend themselves easily to interlinear translation. For example, the idiomatic expression הלך לו ("it went") in Song 2.11 becomes ἐπορεύθη ἑαυτῷ ("it went on its own") and אלך לי ("I will go") in 4.6 is rendered πορεύσομαι ἐμαυτῷ ("I will go on my own"). Unlike the Greek rendering of the similar expression לך לך ("go!") in Gen 12.1, Greek Song renders these idioms in interlinear mode.[13] A similar idiom occurs in 1.8, where אם לא תדעי לך ("if you do not know") is rendered ἐὰν μὴ γνῷς σεαυτήν ("if you do not know yourself"), which creates a misleading resonance with the ancient Greek adage, γνῶθι σεαυτόν ("Know yourself").

Relation to Kaige Translations

Greek Song shares some family resemblances with the even more mechanical translational practices of the καίγε group of translations identified by Barthélemy, but it does not exhibit all of the characteristics of the group. Like the καίγε group, Greek Song (in 3.8; 8.11) translates איש (with the idiomatic meaning "each") with the wooden ἀνήρ ("man"), instead of ἕκαστος ("each"), the more usual OG rendering for this meaning. Greek Song uses both καί γε ("and indeed," 1.16; 8.1) and adverbial πρός ("as well," 1.16; 7.14) as alternate, synonymous translations of both אף ("also, even") and גם ("also").[14]

Date

Greek Song may represent a transitional stage on the way to consistent καίγε practice—or it may simply represent a partial acceptance of some of the principles of the καίγε revisers. At any rate, its similarity to the καίγε translators may suggest that it was created at a similar time, somewhere in the first century before or after the turn of the era. Some of the forms of Greek words may also suggest a time of translation after 100 BCE.[15]

The NETS Translation of Song of Songs

General Approach

The purpose of NETS is to represent (to the extent possible) the original meaning of the Greek translation. Most of its ancient and medieval readers, scribes and interpreters found rather different meanings in it, but these are not our concern in the present work.

Our method takes the NRSV to represent the Hebrew text so that differences between NRSV and NETS often correspond to differences between Hebrew and Greek. However, similarities between NRSV and NETS can be misleading, because the NRSV sometimes follows the Greek text instead of the Masoretic Text. For example, the NRSV follows the Greek text at two points where the Masoretic Text contains nothing: namely, the last line of 3.1, and the third line of 8.2. The Masoretic Text contains these lines, not in these points, but in parallel passages (for 3.1 see 5.6; for 8.2 see 3.4).

Differences between NRSV and NETS can also be misleading. Many of the differences between NRSV and NETS result from the fact that the Greek gives a very literal, word-for-word translation and the NRSV gives a more contextual, meaning-for-meaning translation of the same text. I have attempted to preserve some contextual translations of the NRSV, except where the mechanical nature of the Greek would be misrepresented in the process. Because Greek Song is a mechanical and atomistic translation, this NETS translation is often deliberately mechanical and atomistic rather than contextual. As a result, the reader will no doubt find the NETS translation wooden and awkward in comparison to the NRSV. Wondering what a NETS passage means will be similar to the experience a reader would have with Greek Song.

I have often substituted words in the same semantic domain when the NRSV picks up a sense of the Hebrew that the Greek does not necessarily carry, except perhaps by connotation; e.g., NRSV has "make haste" for δραμοῦμεν (NETS "run") in 1.4 and for φύγε (NETS "flee") in 8.14.

For the sake of making literary echoes clearer, I have often provided translations used elsewhere in NETS. For example, in 5.7, I have translated θέριστρον as "light summer garment," to show a resonance with the same word in Gen 24.65 and 38.14. Within NETS Song, I have been able to give consistent ren-

[13] As far as I can tell, Song 2.11 and 4.6 are the only times in the Septuagint corpus that a form of πορεύεσθαι is followed by a reflexive pronoun.

[14] For more on the relation to the καίγε group, see chapter 2 of Treat, *Lost Keys*.

[15] Forms that may suggest a date after 100 BCE include ταμεῖον (1.4; 3.4; 8.2), λελουσμέναι (in 5.12), and ἐχουδενώσουσιν (in 8.1, 7). For more details on dating, consult chapter 2 of Treat, *Lost Keys*.

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derings for certain Greek words; for example, ὄρος is consistently translated as "mountain"; καί γε as "and indeed"; adverbial πρός as "as well"; and δυνατοί (translating גברים) as "mighty men."

Articles, Simple Conjunctions and Prepositions

In several cases, the presence or absence of articles, simple conjunctions and common prepositions is governed by English usage or by an attempt to follow a contextual translation of the NRSV, rather than an effort to show presence or absence in Greek or to show differences between Hebrew and Greek.

A frequent case deserves mention. In Hebrew the first noun of a "construct" (*shmikhut*) expression does not have an article; for example, שיר השירים, literally, "song of the songs." Following his Hebrew model, the translator of the OG does not use an article for the first noun, even when good Greek usage would call for an article. The NETS translation retains this article only in cases where the English seems to require it; for example, "the fragrance of your anointing oils" (1.3, 4).

Selected Words and Phrases

Greek Song, because it represents the Hebrew mechanically, often feels awkward or strange. For example, in Song 2.2, הבנות ("the daughters") is translated literally as τῶν θυγατέρων ("the daughters"), but the NRSV translation "maidens" fits the context better. In Song 7.9, the NRSV translates וריח אפך contextually and metonymically: "and the scent of your breath." Greek Song translates mechanically: καὶ ὀσμὴ ῥινός σου ("and your nose's fragrance"). Similarly and even less fittingly, in 7.5(4) where אף is likened to a tower, Greek Song insists on μυκτήρ ("nostril").

One of the least felicitous renderings in the book occurs in 4.9c, where we read: ἐν μιᾷ, ἐνθέματι τραχήλων σου. This line is a mechanically atomistic translation of Hebrew,[16] at the sacrifice of a translation that easily makes sense in Greek. First, the feminine μιᾷ ("one") leaves the reader to wonder what feminine Greek substantive might be implied—certainly not the neuter ἐνθέματι. Then, the use of the word ἔνθεμα ("thing put in or on," often understood by early exegetes either contextually as "ornament" or allegorically as "yoke") is no easier to understand. Finally, the Greek translates צורנים (a *hapax legomenon*, apparently meaning "necklaces") as if it were צו(א)רים, the plural of צואר ("neck"). NETS renders the line atomistically ("in one, with an emplacement of your necks") and with a footnote suggests one of several ways in which an ancient reader might have made sense of it in context.

The Greek word λίβανος translates both לבונה ("frankincense") and לבנון ("Lebanon"). Until modern editors began capitalizing λίβανος when it is a proper noun, no reader of Greek could have distinguished between the meanings "frankincense" and "Lebanon" except by context. NETS Song translates as the OG translator would have understood the Hebrew, but Greek readers could well be uncertain. For example, in 4.14, ξύλων τοῦ λιβάνου could be understood either as "trees of Lebanon" (as in Rahlfs) or as "woods of frankincense" (as in Hebrew).

Two Terms of Endearment

In the Hebrew text, the female lover is frequently addressed as רעיתי ("my companion, my friend, my fellow," translated by the NRSV as "my love"). The Old Greek translates רעיתי fairly literally as ἡ πλησίον μου ("the one near me, my neighbor, my companion"), and our NETS translation of Greek Song consistently renders this term into English as "my mate."[17]

In the Hebrew, the male lover is frequently addressed as דודי (translated by the NRSV as "my beloved"). The term דוד can be used either as a term of endearment (like "sweetheart" or "true love") or to denote a family relationship (such as "father's brother" as in 1 Sam. 10.14). Greek Song translates the term with ἀδελφιδός ("little brother").[18] I have found no evidence that ἀδελφιδός was used outside Greek Song (and later commentary on it); it appears that our OG translator coined this diminutive form of ἀδελφός ("brother"). Its use in 5.9 and in 8.1, where it translates אח ("brother"), shows that Greek Song is using this diminutive as a term of endearment. Its use may suggest that the translator was a woman. Because ἀδελφιδός must have sounded unusual in Greek ears, the NETS translation consistently renders it with a formal equivalent that sounds unusual in English: "brotherkin."

16 The translator's Hebrew text apparently varies slightly from the Masoretic Text, even in its *qere* reading.

17 The translation "mate" is also used for πλησίοι in 5.1 and for the male πλησίον μου in 5.16.

18 Judges 10.1 (A and B); 2 Rgns 23.9, 24, and 1 Suppl (1 Chr) 27.32 use πατράδελφος "father's brother" to translate dwd. In Song, Aquila uses πατράδελφος μου, Symmachus uses ὁ ἀγαπητός μου ("my beloved"), and Quinta uses ὁ ἑταῖρός μου ("my companion").

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Adjectives

Hebrew does not have a separate form for adjectives in the comparative and superlative degrees. Greek Song consistently puts adjectives in the unmarked, positive form, even when the context clearly calls for a comparative or superlative form. In 1.2, for example, טובים מיין ("better than wine") is translated ἀγαθοὶ ὑπὲρ οἶνον ("good beyond wine"). Again, in 1.8, היפה בנשים ("O fairest among women") becomes ἡ καλὴ ἐν γυναιξίν ("O fair one among women"). The NRSV translates the adjective contextually. NETS preserves some of the awkwardness of the Greek.

Tense and Mood

The Greek translator usually renders Hebrew verbs in the imperfect tense by Greek verbs in the future tense and renders the Hebrew perfect tense by the imperfect or aorist in Greek. I have used the English present perfect for past tenses that seem contextually to apply to the present or very recent past; e.g., ὥρκισα for השבעתי in 2.7; 3.5; 5.8.

The Greek translator's stereotyped rendition of tenses becomes particularly awkward when future tenses are used, as in 7.9; 8.1–3, to express a wish or unreal condition that we would normally expect a subjunctive or an imperfect to convey. In some of these cases, I have bowed to context and used modals such as "would" in the NETS translation rather than violate common English usage.

Gender and Number

In the Song of Songs, gender-neutral language can confuse the reader. Because Song of Songs is largely composed of dialogues between male and female lovers and their companions, the language is often necessarily gender-specific. The Hebrew text often depends on gender-specific and number-specific verbal cues to signal when speakers change; for example, when a woman addressing a man stops speaking and the man replies to the woman. There are fewer of these cues in Greek and even fewer in English. This can make it difficult to follow dialogue. Greek readers soon solved this problem by adding rubrics to many of their manuscripts of Song of Songs; the rubrics clarified who was speaking to whom at various points in the text. Without a similar aid for the reader in English, it is sometimes difficult to tell who is speaking to whom or even whether an addressee ("you") is singular or plural.

In most instances, of course, there is no difference between the Hebrew and Greek on matters of gender or number. In 8.13, however, the addressee is female in the Masoretic Text and male in the Old Greek.

Editorial Detail

This translation follows the versification used in Rahlfs, which is almost identical to that in the Masoretic Text. Where NRSV verse numbers differ, they appear in parentheses.

Old Greek manuscripts appear to show a tradition of breaking lines according to sense. This NETS translation attempts to preserve these ancient sense-breaks, which occasionally differ from those of the NRSV. In addition, blank space separates both new sections and new speakers.

Bibliographical Note

Especially at difficult points, I have consulted several translations of the Greek text, including especially the Old Latin translations (in Donatien De Bruyne, "Les Anciennes versions latines du Cantique des cantiques," *Revue Bénédictine* 38 [1926] 97–122) and the English translations of Thomson and Brenton. At numerous points, Albert Pietersma's insightful consultation and expertise in the theory and practice of translating OG texts improved this translation substantially.

Jay C. Treat

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1 Song of Songs, which is Salomon's.

2 Let him kiss me from his mouth's kisses!
For your breasts are good beyond wine,
3 and the fragrance of your anointing oils
beyond any spice.
Your name is perfume poured out;
therefore maidens loved you,
4 drew you.
We shall run after you into the fragrance of
your anointing oils.
The king has brought me into his chamber.
Let us exult and rejoice in you;
we will love your breasts beyond wine.
Uprightness has loved you.

5 I am black and beautiful,
O daughters of Ierousalem,
like coverts of Kedar,
like Salomon's skins.
6 Do not look at me, because I am
darkened,
because the sun has looked down on
me.
My mother's sons fought with me;
they made me a keeper in vineyards.
My own vineyard I have not kept!
7 Tell me, you whom my soul loved,
where you pasture your flock,
where you lie down at noon,
lest I become like one who wraps herself up
by your companions' flocks.

8 If you do not know yourself,
O fair one among women,
go forth in tracks of the flocks,
and pasture your kids
by the shepherds' coverts.

9 I have compared you, my mate,
to my mare among Pharao's chariots.
10 How beautiful your cheeks have become,
like turtledoves,
your neck like necklaces.
11 We will make you images of gold,
with points of silver.

12 While[a] the king was on his couch,
my nard gave forth its fragrance.
13 My brotherkin is to me a bag of myrrh;
he shall spend the night between my
breasts.
14 My brotherkin is to me a cluster of henna
in vineyards of Engaddi.

15 Look, you are beautiful, my mate;
look, you are beautiful;
your eyes are doves.

16 Look, you are beautiful, my brotherkin,
and indeed lovely.
As well, our couch is shaded;
17 our houses' beams are cedars;
our coffered panels are cypresses.

2 I am a flower of the plain,
a lily of the valleys.

2 As a lily among brambles,
so is my mate among the daughters.

3 As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,
so is my brotherkin among the sons.
I yearned and sat in his shadow,
and his fruit was sweet in my throat.

4 Bring me into a house of wine;
[b]array love over me[b].
5 Support me with raisin-cakes;
bolster me with apples,
for I am wounded with love.
6 His left hand will be under my head,
and his right will embrace me.
7 I have adjured you, O daughters of
Ierousalem,
by the powers and by the forces of the
field
that you do not stir up or awaken love
until it wish!

8 My brotherkin's voice!
Look, he has come,
leaping upon the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
9 My brotherkin is like the gazelle
or a fawn of stags on the mountains of
Baithel.
Look, here he stands
behind our wall,
peering through the windows,
peeping through the lattices.
10 My brotherkin responds and says to me:
"Arise, come, my mate,
my fair one, my dove;
11 for look, the winter is past;
the rain has left; it went on its own.
12 The flowers have appeared on the earth;
pruning time has come;
the turtledove's voice
has been heard in our land.
13 The fig tree has put forth its figs;
the vines are in blossom;
they have given forth fragrance.
Arise, come, my mate,
my fair one, my dove.
14 And come, my dove, in the rock's shelter
near the outer wall.
Show me your face;
let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely."
15 Catch us foxes,
little ones that ruin vineyards—
and our vines are in blossom!

[a]Or *Until* [b]I.e. *array love (as a signal) over me; or array love (as an army) against me*

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16 My brotherkin is mine, and I am his,
who pastures his flock among the lilies.
17 Until the day breathes
and the shadows stir,
turn, my brotherkin; be like the gazelle
or a fawn of stags on mountains with glens.

3 Upon my bed at night
I sought him whom my soul loved;
I sought him but found him not;
I called him, but he answered me not.
2 "I will rise now and go about in the city,
in the marketplaces and in the streets[a],
and I will seek him whom my soul loved."
I sought him but found him not.
3 The sentinels who go about in the city found me.
"Have you not seen him whom my soul loved?"
4 Scarcely had I passed from them
until I found him whom my soul loved.
I took hold of him and would not let him go
until I brought him into my mother's house
and into a chamber of her who conceived me.
5 I have adjured you, O daughters of Ierousalem,
by the powers and by the forces of the field,
that you do not stir up or awaken love
until it wish!

6 Who is this coming up from the wilderness,
like columns of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
of all the perfumer's powders?
7 Look, it is the couch of Salomon!
Around it are sixty mighty men
of Israel's mighty men,
8 all holding a sword
and expert in war—
a man, his sword at his thigh
because of terror by night.
9 King Salomon made himself a palanquin
from Lebanon's trees.
10 He made its posts[b] silver,
its back gold, its step purple;
its interior was inlaid with stone,
love[c] from Ierousalem's daughters.
11 Come out, and look
at King Salomon,
at the crown with which his mother crowned him
on the day of his wedding
and on the day of his heart's gladness.

4 Look, you are beautiful, my mate;
look, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are doves—
apart from your taciturnity.
Your hair is like flocks of goats
that were revealed from Galaad.
2 Your teeth are like flocks of shorn ewes
that have come up from the washing,
all of which are bearing twins,
and not one among them is barren.
3 Your lips are like a scarlet thread,
and your speech is lovely.
Your cheek is like a rind of pomegranate,
apart from your taciturnity.

4 Your neck is like Dauid's tower,
built into thalpioth[d];
on it hang a thousand shields,
all the mighty men's javelins.
5 Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle,
that feed among the lilies.
6 Until the day breathes
and the shadows stir,
I will go on my own to the mountain of myrrh
and to the hill of frankincense[e].
7 You are altogether beautiful, my mate,
and there is no flaw in you.
8 Come here from Lebanon, O bride;
come here from Lebanon.
You shall come and pass through from the beginning of Faithfulness[f],
from the head[g] of Sanir and Hermon,
from lions' dens,
from leopards' mountains.

9 You heartened us, O my sister bride;
you heartened us with one[h] from your eyes,
[i]in one, with an emplacement of your necks.[i]
10 How beautiful your breasts have become, my sister bride!
How beautiful your breasts have become, above wine,
and your garments' fragrance, beyond all spices!
11 Your lips distill honeycomb, O bride;
honey and milk are under your tongue,
and your garments' fragrance is like Lebanon's fragrance.
12 A garden locked is my sister bride,
a garden locked, a fountain sealed.
13 Your scents[j] are an orchard of pomegranates
with fruit of fruit-trees,
henna with nard,
14 nard and saffron,
calamus and cinnamon,

[a]Or *squares* [b]Or *pillars* [c]I.e. *as a token of love* [d]Heb = ? [e]*Lebanon* = Ra [f]Heb = *Amana* [g]Possibly *top*
[h]Or *one look* [i]Gk uncertain; perhaps *with one turn, with a setting of your neck and throat* [j]Or *emissions*

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with all [a]woods of frankincense[a],
myrrh, aloth[b],
with all chief perfumes—
15 a garden fountain, a well of water,
flowing and purling from Lebanon.

16 Awake, O north wind,
and come, O south wind!
Blow through my garden,
and let my spices waft abroad.
Let my brotherkin descend into his garden
and eat the fruit of its fruit-trees.

5 I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride;
I have gathered my myrrh with my spices;
I have eaten my bread with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk.

Eat, mates, and drink,
and be drunk, brothers and sisters.

2 I am sleeping, but my heart is awake.
My brotherkin's voice!
He is knocking on the door.
"Open to me, my sister, my mate,
my dove, my perfect one,
for my head is wet with dew
and my locks with drops of the night."
3 I had put off my tunic; how could I put it on again?
I had bathed my feet; how could I soil them?
4 My brotherkin extended his hand from the opening,
and my abdomen was stirred for him.
5 I arose to open to my brotherkin;
my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with wet myrrh,
on the bolt's handles.
6 I opened to my brotherkin;
my brotherkin had passed by.
My soul went out when he spoke.
I sought him but did not find him;
I called him, but he answered me not.
7 The sentinels who make their rounds in the city found me;
they beat me; they wounded me.
Sentinels of the walls
took away my light summer garment.
8 I have adjured you, O daughters of Ierousalem,
by the powers and by the forces of the field;
if you find my brotherkin, what will you tell him?
That I have been wounded with love.

9 What is your brotherkin above a brotherkin,
O fair one among women?
What is your brotherkin above a brotherkin,
that you have thus adjured us?

10 My brotherkin is radiant and ruddy,
selected from ten thousands.
11 His head is gold and phaz[c];
his locks are fir trees, black as a raven.
12 His eyes are like doves beside brimming pools of water,
bathed in milk,
sitting beside brimming pools of water.
13 His cheeks are like saucers of spice,
producing perfumes.
His lips are lilies,
distilling wet myrrh.
14 His arms are chased gold,
set with tharsis[d].
His abdomen is an ivory tablet
on a lapis lazuli stone.
15 His legs are marble pillars,
founded upon golden bases.
His appearance is like Lebanon,
choice as cedars.
16 His throat is sweetnesses[e],
and he is altogether an object of desire.
This is my brotherkin, and this is my mate,
O daughters of Ierousalem.

6 Where has your brotherkin gone,
O fair one among women?
Which way has your brotherkin turned his attention?—
and we shall seek him with you!

2 My brotherkin has gone down to his garden,
to saucers of spice,
to pasture his flock in gardens
and to gather lilies.
3 I am my brotherkin's, and my brotherkin is mine,
he who pastures his flock among the lilies.

4 You are beautiful as Goodwill[f], my mate,
comely as Ierousalem—
as awesome a sight as women[g] arrayed!
5 Turn away your eyes from me,
for they make me fly!
Your hair is like flocks of goats
that have shown up from Galaad.
6 Your teeth are like flocks of shorn ewes
that have come up from the washing;
all of them bear twins,
and not one among them is barren.
7 Your lips are like scarlet thread,
and your speech is lovely.
Your cheek is like a rind of pomegranate,
apart from your taciturnity.

8 There are sixty queens and eighty concubines

[a]*trees of Lebanon* = Ra [b]Heb = *aloes* [c]Heb = *refined gold* [d]Heb = a precious stone from Tarshish. [e]Possibly *sweetness itself* [f]Or *goodwill*; Heb = *Tirzah* [g]Possibly *armies*

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and young women without number.
9 My dove, my perfect one, is the only one,
the only one of her mother,
outstanding to her that bore her.
Daughters saw her and will call her happy;
queens and concubines and they will praise her.
10 Who is this peeping forth like the dawn,
fair as the moon, outstanding as the sun—
as awesome a sight as women[a] arrayed?

11 I went down to a nut orchard
to look upon products of the wadi,
to see whether the vine had blossomed,
whether the pomegranates were in bloom.
There I will give you my breasts.
12 My soul was not aware;
it made me as Aminadab's chariots.

7 (6.13)Return, return, O Soulamite!
Return, return, and we shall look upon you.

Why will you look upon the Soulamite?
[b]She who comes like dances of armies[b]!

2(1) How graceful your steps in sandals have become,
O daughter of Nadab!
Your thighs' shapes are like necklaces,
work of[c] a master.
3(2) Your navel is a chased bowl
that never lacks mixed wine.
Your belly is a heap of grain,
hedged round with lilies.
4(3) Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle.
5(4) Your neck is like an ivory tower.
Your eyes are like pools in Hesebon,
by gates of a daughter of many[d].
Your nostril is like a tower of Lebanon,
watching the face of Damascus.
6(5) Your head is upon you like Carmel,
and the plaited hair of your head is like purple cloth;
a king is bound [e]by retinues[e].

7(6) How fair and pleasant you have become,
O love, in your delights!
8(7) This, your stature, is like the palm tree,
and your breasts are like its clusters.
9(8) I said I will climb in the palm tree
and take hold of its heights.
Your breasts shall surely be like clusters of the vine,
and your nose's fragrance like apples,
10(9) and your larynx like good wine
going to my brotherkin [f]for straightness[f],
satisfying lips and teeth.

11(10) I am my brotherkin's,
and his attention is for me.
12(11) Come, my brotherkin;
let us go forth into the field;
let us spend the night in the villages.
13(12) Let us go out early to the vineyards;
let us see whether the vine has bloomed;
the blossom has bloomed;
the pomegranates have bloomed.
There I will give you my breasts.
14(13) The mandrakes have given forth fragrance,
and at our doors are all choice fruits—
new as well as old, O my brotherkin,
I have laid up for you.

8 Who might give you as my brotherkin,
nursing at my mother's breasts?
If I found you outside, I would kiss you,
and indeed no one would despise me.
2 I would lead you;
I would bring you
into my mother's house
and into a chamber of her who conceived me.
I would give you spiced wine to drink,
juice of my pomegranates.
3 His left hand would be under my head,
and his right would embrace me.
4 I adjure you, O daughters of Ierousalem,
by the powers and the forces of the field—
Why stir up or why awaken love
until it wish?

5 Who is this coming up, clad in white,
leaning upon her brotherkin?

Under an apple tree I awakened you.
There your mother was in labor with you;
there she who bore you was in labor with you.

6 Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm,
for love is strong as death,
zeal[g] harsh as Hades.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
its flames.
7 Much water shall not be able to quench love,
and rivers shall not overwhelm it.
If a man offered for love all his livelihood,
they would scorn him with scorn.

8 We have a little sister,
and she has no breasts.
What should we do for our sister,
on the day when she is spoken for?

[a]Possibly *armies* [b]Or *O you who come like dances of armies* [c] + *the hands of* = Ra [d]Heb = *Bath-rabbim*
[e]Gk uncertain; perhaps *in passages* [f]I.e. *in a straight line* [g]Or *jealousy*

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9 If she is a wall,
let us build upon her battlements of silver,
but if she is a door,
let us carve for her a board of cedar.
10 I am a wall,
and my breasts are like towers;
I was in his eyes
as one who finds peace.
11 Salomon had a vineyard at Beelamon;
he entrusted the vineyard to keepers;
a man was to bring for its fruit a thousand pieces of silver.
12 My vineyard, my own, is before me.
The thousand are [a]for Salomon[a],
and the two hundred for the keepers of his fruit.
13 O you who sit in the gardens,
companions are listening to your voice;
make me hear it.
14 Flee, my brotherkin, and be like the gazelle
or the fawn of the stags upon mountains of spices!

[a]*for you, Salomon* = Ra

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